

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-22 are now pending, with claims 12-14, 19 and 20 amended to correct discovered informalities and with claim 22 added. No new matter is introduced (see, e.g., claim 1 as originally filed). Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The present Office Action rejects claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103, as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,664,110 to *Green et al.*, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,897,622 to *Blinn et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,038,283 to *Caveney* and U.S. Patent No. 6,460,020 to *Pool et al.* The rejection is respectfully traversed, because *Green et al.*, *Blinn et al.*, *Caveney*, and *Pool et al.*, alone or in combination, fail to teach, disclose or suggest all of the features recited in the pending claims. For example, independent claim 1 recites:

retrieving shipment tracking data from the shipping mechanism;
adding the shipment tracking data to the database;
correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data; and

independent claim 12, as amended, recites:

a processor having a database for storing and processing package data, the package data including item data;
a Sender's terminal for selectively communicating with said processor;
a first communications link adapted for selectively enabling communication between said processor and said Sender's terminal, for selectively transmitting the package data from said Sender's terminal to said processor, and for selectively transmitting said package data relating to a selected package to said Sender's terminal responsive to a request;
a shipper's terminal;
a second communications link for selectively communicating between said processor and said shipper's terminal;
a customs facilitator terminal; and
a third communications link for selectively communicating between said processor and said customs facilitator terminal.

Thus, the pending independent claim 1 is directed to a novel feature of retrieving shipment tracking data from a shipping mechanism, and correlating package data in a database with the shipment tracking data. Pending independent claim 12 is directed to a novel apparatus including a processor coupled via first through third communications links to sender, shipper, and customs terminals, respectively, and including the functions as claimed.

By contrast, *Green et al.*, *Blinn et al.*, *Caveney*, and *Pool et al.*, alone or in combination, are silent with respect to employing shipment tracking data, much less retrieving shipment tracking data from a shipping mechanism, and correlating package data in a database with the shipment tracking data, as recited in independent claim 1. Similarly, *Green et al.*, *Blinn et al.*, *Caveney*, and *Pool et al.*, alone or in combination, are silent with respect first through third communications links, much less an apparatus including a processor coupled via first through third communications links to sender, shipper, and customs terminals, respectively, and including the functions as claimed in independent claim 12.

Not surprisingly, the present Office Action fails to indicate where the above-noted features are taught or suggested by *Green et al.*, *Blinn et al.*, *Caveney*, and *Pool et al.*, alone or in combination. Accordingly, the present Office Action fails to make a *prima facie* case for obviousness of the invention recited in independent claim 1 and 12 over the applied references.

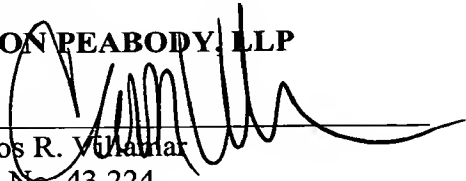
Advantageously, by retrieving shipment tracking data from a shipping mechanism, and correlating package data in a database with the shipment tracking data “returns can be handled on an item-by-item basis, rather than on a shipment-by-shipment basis,” “items are correlated to an accurate description thereof to facilitate customs clearance of each item,” and “[e]ach package, and each item in each package, can be tracked and the results made available over a network, such as the Internet” (see, e.g., Specification, p. 4, ¶ [0017]). By contrast, none of the applied references teach or suggest the noted features nor provide the noted advantages of the inventions recited in independent claim 1 and 12.

Dependent claims 2-11, and 13-22 are allowable over *Green et al.*, *Blinn et al.*, *Caveney*, and *Pool et al.*, taken alone or in combination, on their on merits and for at least the reasons as argued above with respect to independent claims 1 and 12.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. However, if the Examiner deems that any issue remains after considering this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney to expedite the prosecution and engage in a joint effort to work out a mutually satisfactory solution.

Respectfully submitted,

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